



**For Immediate Release:**

## **20 former Palmetto Pro Open players listed for U.S. Open tournament**

Want to know the level of play at the annual Palmetto Pro Open over the last five years at the Palmetto Tennis Center? Twenty former players in Sumter's own USTA Women's Pro Circuit \$10,000 event are listed in the U.S. Open's Main Draw, Qualifying Draw or alternate list.

And for the first time in U.S. Open history, the Qualifying Draw will be televised. Beginning on Tuesday, Aug. 21, the Qualifying Draw can be seen on CBS Sports Network. The Main Draw will be televised on the Tennis Channel, ESPN2 and CBS.

Headlining the list is Sloane Stephens. The 19-year-old is ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in the tournament and has a spot locked up in the Grand Slam's main draw, which starts Monday, Aug. 27.

Stephens participated in the inaugural PPO in 2008 and advanced to the semifinals. Just 15 at the time, she entered the tournament as the seventh-seed and played one of the tournament's most-memorable matches to date – a 6-4, 6-7(5), 7-6(7) win over Gabriela Paz in the quarterfinals.

Since then, Stephens has climbed the WTA ladder as she reached a career-high ranking of 46 in the world last year. Stephens is 92-67 in singles since the semifinal loss in the 2008 PPO with one runner-up finish in Caserta, Italy in 2010 and one championship in 2011 in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Stephens was a tie-break away from advancing to the Wimbledon quarterfinals a few months ago and lost in the quarterfinals at the French Open in May. She advanced to the Round of 32 in last year's U.S. Open.

Four players – Alison Riske, Grace Min, Petra Rampre and Chi Chi Scholl – will be in the Qualifying Draw for the U.S. Open. Riske (161) made it to the second round in 2009 PPO; Min (180) made it to the second round of the 2008 PPO; Rampre (207) won the 2009 PPO; and Scholl lost in the first round of the 2008 PPO.

Riske has made it to the main draw in the past two Australian Opens, the 2010 and 2011 Wimbledon and last year's U.S. Open.

Min has only one other Grand Slam experience and that was at Wimbledon earlier this year where she lost in the first round of the Qualifying Draw.

Rampre has played in the Qualifying Draw of three Australian Opens (2000, 2001, 2012), three French Opens (2000, 2001, 2012), three Wimbledons (2000, 2001, 2012) and four U.S. Opens (1998, 1999, 2000, 2011), but has yet to make the Main Draw in any Grand Slam event.

Scholl played in this year's Australian Open and French Open Qualifying Draws and last year's U.S. Open Qualifying Draw.

The other 15 former PPO players are hoping to have their names called from the alternates list.

On the Alternates-to-Main Draw list are: Ashley Weinhold (284, 2<sup>nd</sup> round 2010 PPO); Eugenie Bouchard (312, 1<sup>st</sup> round 2008 PPO); Whitney Jones (685, quarterfinalist of 2011 PPO); and Brooke Austin (1117, runner-up 2011 PPO, 1<sup>st</sup> round 2012 PPO).

On the Alternates-to-Qualifying Draw list are: Bojana Bobusic (244, semifinalist 2011 PPO); Paz (280, quarterfinalist 2008 PPO); Chieh-Yu Hsu (353, semifinalist 2009 PPO); Mayo Hibi (412, quarterfinalist 2012 PPO); Nicole Melichar (427, quarterfinalist 2010 PPO); Alexandra Mueller (452, quarterfinalist 2010 PPO).

Alexis King (563, 1<sup>st</sup> round 2008 PPO, runner-up 2010 PPO, champion 2011 PPO, 1<sup>st</sup> round 2012 PPO); Diana Ospina (593, 2<sup>nd</sup> round 2012 PPO); Whitney Jones (777, quarterfinalist 2011 PPO); Nadia Echeverria Alam (833, 2<sup>nd</sup> round 2011 PPO); and Denise Starr (958, 1<sup>st</sup> round 2012 PPO).

Austin is on both alternate lists.

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